

APPROACH TO DIAGNOSIS

The diagnostic laboratory depends on the referring veterinarian to submit quality samples which will provide optimal opportunity for the diagnosis of disease. Often we receive tissues to diagnose a specific disease entity when there are a number of other possibilities which may require additional tissues. Other times we receive tissues from animals that do not represent the disease situation. An organized, objective, and thorough approach is required to obtain the proper diagnosis. Listed below are steps to follow which aid in diagnosis.

- A. Obtain a good history; make careful and thorough clinical observations.
- B. Categorize the problem as to organs or organ systems that may be involved.
- C. Using the information obtained, form a broad list of possible diagnoses and rule out as many as possible.
- D. Narrow your list of possible diagnoses by additional clinical observations or “in house” laboratory procedures.
- E. Submit the history, clinical, and necropsy findings along with the proper tissues for diagnosing any one of the diseases listed in your differential. Follow the guidelines given on the following pages to determine which tissues are needed.
- F. If the condition is complex, or does not present a clear clinical picture, submit a broad assortment of tissues, including sections of major organs and grossly visible lesions.

ABORTIONS

- A. Diagnosis of the cause of abortion is difficult and complex.
- B. Submit multiple fetuses and placentas to increase the probability of diagnosis.
- C. Send the entire fetus and placenta to the laboratory. (Placenta is essential to diagnose some causes of abortion).
- D. Rinse the fetus and placenta with clean tap water and place them in a plastic bag. Force the air out of the bag before sealing it.
- E. Refrigerate the fetus until you are ready to ship. Ship with ice packs in an insulated container (ice chests are ideal containers).
- F. Collect and submit the first of paired serum samples from the suspected aborting animal. The second serum sample should be collected and submitted in 2-3 weeks.
- G. If a toxic condition is suspected, submit samples of the aborting animal’s feed and water.
- H. If the fetus and placenta cannot be shipped, submit the following:
 - 1. FRESH TISSUE FOR BACTERIAL CULTURE, VIROLOGY, AND DIRECT EXAMINATION
Stomach contents, placenta, liver, lung, spleen, kidney, and brain.
 - 2. HISTOPATHOLOGICAL EXAMINATION
Placenta, Lung, tongue (tip), liver, heart, adrenal, kidney, thymus, and brain.
 - 3. NITRATE
Eye or aqueous humor.